

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed January 8, 2009, has been received and its contents carefully noted. The pending claims, claims 1-11, were rejected. By this Response, claims 1, 4, 6, 7 and 9 have been amended, claims 12-15 have been added, and claims 2-3, 5, 8, and 10-11 have been canceled. Applicants have amended the claims to employ language commonly used in the art to characterize the gate valve (pressure control valve) structure, i.e. the first and second annular surfaces of the valving element, the valve seat, and associated purge gas supply ports. Support may be found in the Specification and the claims as originally filed. See, for example, paragraphs 0035 and 0042 and Figure 2 of the application as originally filed. No statutory new matter has been added. Therefore, reconsideration and entry of the claims, as amended, are respectfully requested.

Amendment to the Drawings and Specification

Applicant respectfully submits that Figure 2 has been amended to specifically point out the annular surface (42a) of the valve seat 42 and the corresponding annular surface 41a of the valving element 41 that press together with the sealing member (O-ring 53) therebetween. These additions clarify the description of the claimed invention. The Specification has been amended to indicate the reference numerals added in Figure 2. Also, paragraph [0023] has been corrected to properly refer to the "valve seat" as "42", not "41". As all these surfaces are shown in Figure 2 as originally filed, Replacement Sheet 2/6 and the amendment to the specification does not add any statutory new matter. Therefore, entry of these amendments to the Drawings and Specification are respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(b)

The Examiner rejected claims 9 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Horie (US 5,950,646). Specifically, the Examiner deemed that Horie discloses the claimed invention in col. 11, lines 39-42, Figure 6, and the corresponding text. The rejection is traversed.

Horie fails to teach or suggest Applicant's claimed pressure control valve (gate valve) where:

(i) the gate valve is provided therein within a plurality of first purge gas supply ports (e.g., 46) circumferentially arrayed beside the first annular surface (e.g., 42a) of the valve seat (e.g., 42) to jet a purge gas along the first annular surface of the valve seat; and

(ii) the valving element (e.g., 41) is provided therein with a plurality of second purge gas supply ports (e.g., 56) circumferentially arrayed beside the second annular surface (e.g., 41a) of the valving element to jet a purge gas along the second annular surface of the valving element.

Incidentally, the Examiner stated that “Horie teaches wherein at least one purge gas supply port includes a plurality of purge gas supply ports 176a/176b (Figure 6), except for arranged circumferentially”. See paragraphs 9 and 17 of the Office action. However, Applicant respectfully points out that, as shown in Figure 5 of Horie, the purge gas supply port 176a is provided for valve 132a and the purge supply port 176b is provided for another valve 132b. Thus, the plurality of purge gas supply ports 176a/176b in Horie’s system does not correspond to the purge gas supply port, valving element and valve seat as now claimed by Applicant.

Since Horie does not teach Applicant’s arrangement of the purge gas supply port, valving element and valve seat as claimed, Horie does not anticipate the claimed invention. Therefore, Applicant respectfully urges that the claims, as amended, are novel and the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) should be withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

The Examiner rejected claims 1-3 and 5-8 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Masayuki (JP 08-285132) in view of Horie. The Examiner rejected claim 4 as being unpatentable over Masayuki in view of Horie and further in view of Williams (US 4,554,942). The Examiner rejected claim 11 as being unpatentable over Horie. Each rejection is traversed.

Applicant respectfully urges that the cited documents, alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest the present invention, as claimed. In particular, as recognized by the Examiner, Masayuki fails to teach the provision of purge gas supply ports as originally defined by claims 1 and 7 (and claim 9). Thus, the Examiner cited Horie as teaching purge gas supply port 176a. However, as provided above, Horie fails to teach or suggest Applicant’s purge gas supply port, valving element and valve seat as claimed. Therefore, Horie does not alleviate the deficiencies

of Masayuki. Similarly, Williams does not alleviate the deficiencies of Masayuki as Williams does not teach or suggest such purge gas supply port, valving element and valve seat as claimed. Thus, the disclosures of Masayuki, Hori and Williams, alone or in combination, do not result in the claimed invention as a whole.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully urges that the claims, as amended, are unobvious and the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) should be withdrawn.

Request for Interview

Applicants respectfully request either a telephonic or an in-person interview should there be any remaining issues.

CONCLUSION

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

It is not believed that extensions of time are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in accompanying documents. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to prevent abandonment of this application, then such extensions of time are hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. 1.136(a), and any fees required therefor are hereby authorized to be charged to **Deposit Account No. 02-4300, Attorney Docket No. 033082 M 297.**

Respectfully submitted,
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